



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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Public Health Alert: Boil Water Order issued for private wells

Residents using private wells that have been flooded by the recent severe weather should take precautions against waterborne illnesses by boiling well water for two minutes and then straining it before consumption, Southwest Health District Environmental Health Director Dewayne Tanner warned today.

"Southwest Health District has issued a Boil Water Order for private wells in Colquitt, Decatur, Miller and Seminole counties," Tanner said. "Under the Boil Water Order, residents in these areas should limit consumption to bottled water or boil well water for two minutes at a rolling boil and strain it before using it to brush their teeth, prepare food or drink."

Water need not be boiled for other domestic activities, such as washing laundry or bathing, he said.

"We are also aware of localized flooding in other parts of the district," said Tanner. "If you are concerned about contamination of your well water, please contact your county health department, and an environmental health specialist will test it." Fees for testing well water will be waived for residents in flooded areas.

Flooding, high winds and other severe weather may cause additional health hazards, added Southwest Health District Emergency Preparedness Director Julie Miller. "Power outages that last for extended periods of time can result in refrigerated foods becoming contaminated. To be on the safe side, when in doubt, throw it out," she said.

Miller also said that rescue and recovery workers should make sure that their tetanus shots are up-to-date. "County health departments have tetanus vaccine on hand," she said.

In addition, Miller suggested that people have an emergency go kit ready should the need for evacuation arise.

"An emergency go kit should contain your families' important papers, any medications needed by family members, personal hygiene items, changes of clothing, diapers and emergency contact information," she said. "If you are told to evacuate by local authorities, you will be directed to a shelter. Please let shelter officials know if you have special medical needs," she said.

Public health officials are already working with Emergency Operations Centers in several Southwest Georgia communities affected by severe weather.

Public Health officials will continue monitoring events. Please listen to local media and emergency workers to remain informed on health and safety recommendations, Miller said.

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